

and Republicans when it comes to spending and he is right. For 6 long years, President Bush and the Republican rubber-stamp Congress slashed budgets in critical areas such as health care, college aid and support for our veterans.

For years, Republicans have cut veterans health care funding and budgeted billions less than they need. Last year, Republicans failed to even pass a bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs. Imagine that, did not even pass a bill.

After 6 years of Republican damage, Democrats will do things differently. This week, we begin to invest in America's priorities, and we're fiscally responsible.

While President Bush and the Republican Congress ignored the needs of America's veterans, the Democratic House will bring a bill to the floor that includes the largest increase in funding for veterans health care in the 77-year history of the VA.

Today, I would hope that this entire House would support our veterans by supporting this bill. It is long overdue, but the Democrats intend to deliver like our troops deserve.

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SHOW TAXPAYERS HOW THEIR MONEY IS BEING SPENT

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the very first reform passed by the new majority in the 110th Congress was a rule to create transparency publicizing projects earmarked for Federal money. Now the majority party is suggesting to the American people that it's okay to bury these earmarks in conference bills, which we know cannot be amended or challenged in any way.

Republicans last year brought more sunshine and transparency into this process, and instead of building on that, as promised by this new majority, Congress is taking a giant step backwards.

As a member of the House Budget Committee, I'm highly concerned that waiting until the very end of the law-making process to hide pork barrel spending is the simplest way to create a slush fund in the budget. This way of spending will lose America's trust.

Mr. Speaker, Americans have trusted us to spend their taxpayer money wisely and honestly. We have a responsibility to show them exactly how their money is being spent and defend it on the House floor.

DEMOCRATS SET TO APPROVE FOUR APPROPRIATIONS BILLS THIS WEEK THAT SET RIGHT PRIORITIES

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this week the House should approve four appropriations bills that set the right priorities for our Nation and do it in a fiscally responsible manner.

Yesterday, we debated the homeland security bill, and we'll continue today, but we should make the public aware that beyond the issues that we seem to be distracted by, the main point about the homeland security bill is that it strengthens our borders by providing funds for 3,000 additional border patrol agents. It also prioritizes the need of our first responders while doubling the amount of cargo that will be screened at our airports.

Democrats are going to bring a veterans and a military construction bill to the floor that includes the largest increase in veterans health care funding in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration.

We will also be bringing to the floor the Energy and Water and Interior appropriations bills. Now the Democrats will address the important issue of global warming in those bills. These bills also show that, as Democrats, we recognize what a serious problem that is.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize, these bills were approved in committee with strong bipartisan support. They should receive that same kind of support here on the House floor.

OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE HOUSE

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as we come today, it marks the one-quarter mark into the 110th Congress under now the new leadership of the Democrat leadership.

And what has this leadership wrought for the American public? During this time, firstly, the largest tax increase on the American family in U.S. history; secondly, a breaking of the rules, a breaking of the rules and the promises of transparency and openness that they made to the American public and that the GOP, the Republicans, began to initiate in the last Congress; and finally, we learned last night from this new majority, they bring to us slush funds, slush funds under the direction of one man on the other side done at the late end of night to control billions of dollars.

The Homeland Security bill that we were debating last night and will be debating today is too important to trivialize in this manner. It is too important to the American public, and it is too important to my constituents in the 5th Congressional District of New Jersey who live in the shadows of the World Trade Center.

Mr. Speaker, this past November election, the American public has spoken. They say they want openness, they want transparency. We demand it of this House.

HOW MUCH WORSE DO THINGS HAVE TO GET AT JUSTICE BEFORE REPUBLICANS HOLD HIM ACCOUNTABLE?

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, just how bad do things have to get at the Justice Department before congressional Republicans say enough is enough?

On Monday, Senate Democrats tried to bring up a vote of no confidence in Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. While seven Republicans supported an effort to allow for an up-or-down vote, the rest of the Senate Republican Caucus blocked it procedurally.

Are my Republican colleagues serious? Do they actually believe, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that this Attorney General can continue to serve as the Nation's leading law enforcement officer?

Let's not forget that Gonzales still does not remember why he fired eight U.S. attorneys last year. Nor should we forget that Gonzales tried to pressure then-Attorney General Ashcroft into signing off on the secret telephone surveillance program while Ashcroft sat in a hospital bed preparing for surgery.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats are restoring real accountability to Washington, but it would be nice if we could get a little help from our Republican friends.

CONGRESSIONAL PRAYER CAUCUS

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Congressional Prayer Caucus to formally acknowledge the importance of prayer in American life and history.

Today, I remind my colleagues, constituents and country of our need for prayer by reading a portion of the words offered on the floor of the United States Senate on June 13, 1947, by Peter Marshall. Mr. Marshall prayed:

"God of our fathers, in whose name this Republic was born, we pray that by Thy help we may be worthy to receive Thy blessings upon our labors.

"In this world where men have made deceit a habit, lying an art, and cruelty a science, help us to show the moral superiority of the way of life we cherish. Here may men see truth upheld, honesty loved and kindness practiced.

"We do not pray that other Nations may love us, but that they may know that we stand for what is right, unafraid, with the courage of our convictions.

"May our private lives and our public actions be consistent with our prayers.

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

PROSECUTOR GONE WILD

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)